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THE HISTORY OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

BY

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THE HISTORY OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

An Individual Study Project
Intended for Publication

by

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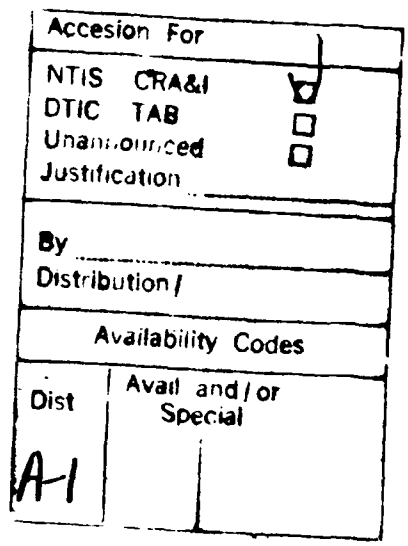

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ABSTRACT

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There is a paucity of material written about the history, development and growth of Military Intelligence. The purpose of this paper is to examine the development of intelligence, both organizationally and functionally, since the turn of the century. The examination will include historical milestones as well as comments from key commanders during our involvement in four major wars during this period. The end result should provide to members of the Military Intelligence Corps an article that summarizes and explains how we have finally come together as a Corps and provide information that will perhaps preclude mistakes made in the past from reoccurring in the future.

INTRODUCTION

On 1 July 1987 the United States Army Military Intelligence Corps was activated. This was a significant event in the history of Military Intelligence and was ceremoniously celebrated throughout the Corps. The Chief of the Military Intelligence Corps, Major General Julius Parker, Jr., stated that the day was,

> a recognition and celebration of our evolution from a plethora of diverse and separate intelligence agencies into the cohesive MI community we enjoy today. In short, it symbolizes the fact that Army Intelligence has truly arrived.[1]

The activation of the Corps was symbolic in that it was the final step for Military Intelligence to become completely aligned with the rest of the Army as part of the regimental system. This coming together is quite significant because prior to 1975, Military Intelligence had been disjointed both organizationally and functionally.

Intelligence has been provided to commanders since the Revolutionary War. It has been available at the strategic and tactical levels in many forms, to include human intelligence, photographic intelligence, and signals intelligence. However, it was not until almost the turn of the century before the first initiative was taken to bring the Corps together organizationally

and functionally. Therefore, this article will examine how the Corps came to be what it is today, its growth since the turn of the century, and its contributions during four major wars. Many comments concerning intelligence and its evolution during this era will come from commanders and their G-2's.

Members of the Military Intelligence Corps need to understand the history surrounding their organization. Many of the challenges facing members of the Corps today have their origins in the past. However, I believe that after reviewing our Corps' history, and understanding the immense progress that has been made during the past two hundred plus years, we can justly be proud of our accomplishments. We must continue to examine ways to improve our ability to provide commanders accurate, timely, and reliable intelligence. Our soldiers must be of the highest quality and be expert in their soldier skills as well as their technical skills. An examination of the past is an excellent way to prepare ourselves for the future.

TURN OF THE CENTURY/WORLD WAR I

Intelligence had been available for commanders for many years but no formal structure existed within the Army until 1885 when the Military Information Division (MID) was established. This signalled the beginning of an intelligence organization at the national level. The MID was part of the Adjutant General's Office of the War Department and had the responsibility of filing

intelligence information received from embassies. This was followed a few years later by Congress formally approving the establishment of the Army attache system which was the formal beginning of our foreign strategic collection effort. In 1903, Elihu Root, Secretary of War, was successful in getting Congress to authorize an Army General Staff. One of the divisions of this staff was the Military Information Division. During the next few years, the MID did not get much work and was downgraded from a separate division to a branch of the War College Division. By 1915, it had almost become non-existent.

However, it was at this time that perhaps the most important individual in the history and growth of Military Intelligence was assigned to the MID. Major Ralph H. Van Deman, considered by many to be the father of Military Intelligence, had been trained as a cavalry officer. He developed an interest and respect for intelligence through his service in the Philippines and China. He was involved in organizing human intelligence collection efforts as well as conducting reconnaissance of lines of communication during these assignments.

Upon his assignment to the MID in 1915, Major Van Deman fought against great bureaucratic resistance to get it reestablished as a separate division of the General Staff. The resistance to his efforts came from the highest levels.

> The Chief of Staff did not see the need for such a thing as intelligence, and said if it were really true that the British and French had such an effort, we could simply go to them and say, "here we are now ready for service - we would be pleased if you hand over to us all the necessary information concerning the enemy which your intelligence services have obtained."[2]

However, Major Van Deman persevered and eventually won approval for the reorganization of the Military Intelligence Branch of the War College Division. This was the first time that the term intelligence had been associated with the organization of the MID. Between 1915 and 1917, now Colonel Van Deman developed at the national level a highly successful intelligence organization that included sections involved in many intelligence functions. His organization included several hundred military and over 11,000 civilians involved in the Counter Intelligence effort. He also provided assistance to General Pershing and his G-2, Colonel Nolan, in establishing an intelligence apparatus at the tactical level. This was to be the harbinger of an all-source intelligence collection and processing effort at all echelons. As one individual noted,

> Before America entered the World War the Military Intelligence Service, as a coordinated and cooperating system, did not exist in our military establishment....During the World War, under the name of military intelligence, there was built up in the American forces a carefully organized system represented by an Intelligence Service group at every headquarters from that of the battalion on up to include the War Department.[3]

The organization in Europe included intelligence officers from Corps down to battalion serving as G-2's/S-2's. In fact, it was General Pershing's organization of his general staff, modeled after the British and French, that was the genesis of the term G-2 in the American Army.

It is hard to believe that such tremendous efforts towards developing intelligence organizations and functions would be

allowed to dissolve. However, as history reveals in the development of our Corps, intelligence organizations tended to prosper in war and flounder in peacetime. Furthermore, the development of intelligence at the strategic level would be accomplished at a far greater pace than at the tactical level. Throughout this period there wasn't a formal system or structure to train intelligence soldiers. A major war should have been the catalyst to give us a sustained intelligence system and organization to support commanders in the future. What we had at the beginning of World War II was alarming at best.

WORLD WAR II

The twenty odd years between World War I and World War II, unfortunately, did not provide a period of growth for Military Intelligence. General Pershing brought his concept of the general staff to the War Department. He wanted to have a five section staff instead of the four sections that had previously existed. Due to congressional limitations on the number of general officers, one staff element, the G-2, was staffed by a colonel while all others were staffed with general officers. Serious degradations in intelligence organization occurred during this period with both a decline in the counter intelligence and in the signals intelligence effort. Despite some resurgence, both in the early 1930's, the increases were predominantly at the strategic level with no corresponding increase at the tactical level. The G-2 at the tactical level was the place for officers

who were not doing well in the combat branches. This fact will be substantiated later by observations from key senior officers.

Today, the study of history is incorporated into all levels of training for officers in the Army. We learn a great deal from people like Clausiwitz, Jomini, and Napoleon. Furthermore, we learn that our great contemporary leaders like Eisenhower, MacArthur, and Bradley were great readers of history. Therefore, it is surprising to learn that the lessons from pre-World War I concerning the need for a viable intelligence organization at all echelons was ignored during the years preceeding World War II.

In the light of his understanding of history, General Marshall noted the deficiencies in intelligence:

> Prior to World War II, our foreign intelligence was little more than what a military attache would learn at dinner, more or less over a cup of coffee.[4]

General Eisenhower in his book, Crusade in Europe, noted many deficiencies that existed in the organization and function of intelligence before World War II. Among these deficiencies was the lack of adequate schools to train personnel to perform intelligence functions. This resulted in a shortage of qualified intelligence analysts who could support commanders and senior planners. Therefore, the War Department was not able to effectively plan for the conduct of World War II as a result of these deficiencies. General Eisenhower explains that the cause of the problem was lack of support by senior officers and civilians between the wars and subsequent inadequate funding for Army intelligence.[5]

General Omar Bradley, in his book, A Soldier's Story of the Allied Campaigns from Tunis to the Elbe, states,

> The American Army's long neglect of intelligence training was soon reflected by the ineptness of our initial undertakings. For too many years in the preparation of officers for command assignments, we had overlooked the need for specialization in such activities as intelligence....In some stations, the G-2 became the dumping ground for officers ill-suited for command. I recall how scrupulously I avoided the branding that came with an intelligence assignment in my own career. Had it not been for the uniquely qualified reservists who so capably filled so many of our intelligence jobs throughout the war, the Army would have been pressed....[6]

General Eisenhower and General Bradley have probably identified many if not all of the deficiencies that existed in intelligence at the outbreak of World War II. However, intelligence did play a vital role in supporting commanders at all echelons. Many commanders and their G-2's quickly organized an effective intelligence organization to support the planning and execution of the war.

Major General Sir Kenneth Strong was General Eisenhower's intelligence chief when General Eisenhower was in the position of Supreme Commander in Europe. His comments on the intelligence staff that supported General Eisenhower are quite illuminating. General Strong reveals in his book, Intelligence at the Top, that the intelligence organization that supported General Eisenhower at the Supreme Headquarters at Busby was a superb operational intelligence staff. Furthermore, he explains that the intelligence organization that supported the preparation and execution of the Normandy invasion was perhaps the best ever assembled.[7]

General Eisenhower and General Strong were not the only commander and intelligence chief to recognize the need for a viable intelligence organization. General Patton was a consumate supporter of intelligence and took the necessary actions to provide himself with the means to gather intelligence. He was a fervent believer in reconnaissance and used his calvary units to execute this mission. The Germany Army often referred to these units as "Patton's Ghosts."

Brigadier General Koch served as General Patton's G-2. Like General Strong he believed that the intelligence functions and organizations that existed were highly effective. In his book, G-2: Intelligence For Patton, General Koch states,

> In Patton's commands, intelligence was always viewed as big business and treated accordingly. Although working, by necessity, in the shadows, it always had its place in the sun. It was never viewed as subordinate to any other staff activity. The G-2 was never the forgotten man. On many occasions, the commander's group included but two others, one of them the G-2.*

The efforts at all echelons by the end of the war had paid considerable dividends. We did provide our leadership with quality intelligence and made significant organizational changes. History is replete with intelligence successes during this era. General William Donovan's organization of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor of the CIA, was outstanding in organizing strategic intelligence efforts as well as conducting clandestine operations. The breaking and exploiting of the German and Japanese codes and successes in photo reconnaissance are only a few other examples of the great

strides made in intelligence during this period. Perhaps the best summation comes from a book, The Evolution of American Military Intelligence,

> In the light of these handicaps, the progress made in five short years was remarkable. In that brief span of time, a system was created that kept field commanders, their superiors at theater, the War Department, and ultimately the President, constantly informed of a broad spectrum of intelligence collected by every available means....What did happen was that World War II promoted the professionalism of the Signal Intelligence Service, the Counterintelligence Corps, and the new breed from OSS. It established conclusively the value of aerial surveillance. Moreover, it validated a requirement for knowledgable intelligence officers serving as G-2's and S-2's of tactical units supported by trained MI specialists.*

KOREA

The post World War II demobilization would have a serious impact on the ability of the U. S. Army to provide quality intelligence in a timely manner to commanders during the Korean War. Tactical intelligence capabilities were quickly dissipated. The Counter Intelligence Corps which had provided such great service in all theaters in World War II was relegated to predominantly strategic intelligence missions. The Signals Intelligence Service which had been under the direction and control of the Signal Corps was restructured in 1945 as the Army Security Agency (ASA), activated and put under the control of the Army G-2. Unfortunately, SIGINT support to tactical units was discontinued. Furthermore, ASA joined its Air Force and Navy counterparts by receiving strategic direction from the Armed

Forces Security Agency which was later to be redesignated the National Security Agency. These were not the only structural changes to occur concerning intelligence. General William Donovan's Office of Strategic Service (OSS) was reorganized and eventually became the Central Intelligence Agency as part of the National Security Act of 1947. All of these organizational and functional changes occurred prior to the outbreak of the Korean War.[10]

One of the greatest controversies associated with the Korean War is whether or not the invasion by the North Koreans constituted an intelligence failure. I believe that the problem was not a lack of available indications and warning of the North Korean invasion, but rather a lack of qualified personnel capable of interpreting it.

The Far Eastern Command (FEC) in Japan did not have intelligence reporting responsibilities for Korea. Adequate intelligence resources were not allocated towards the Korean situation. Many reports were filed by the FEC related to the Korean problem but no one was interpreting the information included in the reports. Furthermore, we still did not have a training base to develop intelligence analysts prior to the start of the Korean War. Collectively, these problems resulted in the fact that the Korean invasion was not properly anticipated.[11]

General Matthew B. Ridgway summarizes the situation in his comments about an intelligence report sent six days before the Korean invasion, by a CIA unit in Korea, to the FEC in Tokyo,

> How anyone could have read this report and not anticipated an attack is hard to fathom. Yet this report was not used as the basis for any conclusion by G-2 at General Headquarters in Tokyo and it was forwarded to Washington in routine fashion, with no indication of urgency.[12]

The prewar deficiencies continued into the war. The situation was grim. Some surveys indicated that as late as 1951 only 7% of personnel in intelligence positions on the Eighth Army Staff had had any training or previous experience in intelligence.

Despite all of the problems encountered in the Korean War with regards to intelligence organization and functions, many positive outcomes occurred related to the growth and development of intelligence. Significant strides were made in the areas of human intelligence, and in the use of the Special Security Office (SSO) system. The Army Security Agency (ASA) and Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) units increased dramatically in size to support the tactical commander.[13] We can be grateful that our lessons learned were not all lost.

In many ways, the end of the war in Korea was the end of our not being prepared to confront the next war with necessary intelligence personnel, equipment, and units. Our soldiers would receive training to perform their functions in a professional and capable manner. This was the legacy of Korea and brings us to Vietnam.

VIETNAM

Following Korea and preceding our involvement in Vietnam,

several key events occurred with regards to Military Intelligence organization and functions. Intelligence units were finally organized and provided to tactical units in all theaters. Although no standard organization was provided, most units were provided an organization capable of performing interrogation, imagery interpretation, order of battle analysis, and counter-intelligence functions. Additionally, ASA also provided tactical support units capable of performing SIGINT support to tactical commanders. The fact that all of these functions were not in one organization was an issue that was resolved at a later date.

At the strategic level, in 1961 the Defense Intelligence Agency was created and on 1 July 1962 the Military Intelligence Branch was created. Training for intelligence specialists in several disciplines was established and by 1962 the MI Branch was the fifth largest organization in the United States Army. We were much better prepared, organizationally and functionally, to support our commanders before and during the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War, however, had a devastating effect on the nation, the people, and the military. The controversy associated with this war, unfortunately, clouded the many outstanding accomplishments of individuals and units from all services in support of our military effort.

Major General Joseph A. McChristian was the J-2 in Vietnam from 1965-1967. General McChristian was frustrated by the delay in getting the intelligence resources he needed, but the resources allocated exceeded anything we had provided in the

past. He took over at the time the Army was transitioning from an advisory role to a combat role. His final summation substantiates the quality of his intelligence organization that developed during his tour,

> The intelligence challenge in Vietnam was more than finding the enemy. The challenge was providing timely, accurate, adequate, and useable intelligence in support of decision makers from the Military Assistance Command Commander and his battlefield commanders to the Commander in Chief in Washington. An organization designed to meet this challenge was created.[14]

Our delay in getting organized was only one of several deficiencies. Our shortfalls in intelligence were primarily related to the type of conflict we were engaged in fighting. Our data base relative to Vietnam was marginal at best. Furthermore, clear lines and boundaries could not be drawn relative to who was or was not the enemy. We had a shortage of trained intelligence specialists. Some commanders at the lower echelons complained that they were deprived of needed intelligence due to compartmentation. Furthermore, the Vietnam War was a protracted war with many phases requiring different intelligence needs. From the early advisory role years, through the years of expanded U.S. commitment and subsequent use of combat forces, to the final years of U.S. presence, intelligence organization and functions expanded and contracted to meet the requirement.

It is always easy to identify shortfalls or problems within any system as large as the United States Army. Vietnam, however, introduced many new types of sensors and intelligence collection capabilities that would pave the way for future combat developments. I think the total appropriate measure and support of the

intelligence effort in Vietnam is summed up correctly as follows,

> Ultimately, however, Army intelligence was able to construct a serviceable organization in Vietnam, even though all of its problems were never solved. Units down to the maneuver battalion learned to coordinate intelligence with operations by establishing joint tactical operating centers (TOC's).... Special intelligence which had been available only to high level commanders for strategic applications in WW II, now became a tactical resource.[18]

POST VIETNAM

The Intelligence Organization and Stationing Study (IOSS) conducted in 1975 at the direction of the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, and under the guidance of Major General Joseph J. Ursano. The findings of this study caused Military Intelligence to change its identity. The IOSS study identified shortfalls in the intelligence structure. The shortfalls included our organization, production, training, and resource allocation. The ultimate outcome was the establishment of an organizational structure that would enhance intelligence operations at all echelons. The Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) was formed to provide an all source intelligence capability at echelons above corps. This helped to eliminate fragmentation that existed in intelligence production. The Combat Electronic Warfare Intelligence (CEWI) unit was born. This gave the tactical commander his own organic assets in all intelligence functions with which to perform his mission. Furthermore, it reduced overhead that had existed in multiple intelligence units. Training was centralized under the United States Army Intelligence Center and School, a TRADOC organization.

Essentially, Military Intelligence was organized in compliance with the rest of the Army.

CONCLUSION

The Military Intelligence Corps is stronger today than at any time in its past. This is directly attributable to those pioneers who served through periods of great difficulty and persevered. Our Corps is the fifth largest organization in the United States Army with over 24,000 soldiers in the active component and 19,000 soldiers in the reserves. We have 6,000 officers, 17,000 enlisted soldiers and over 1,800 civilians working to make the Military Intelligence Corps great. Our Corps has over 20 brigades, 58 battalions, 157 separate companies deployed around the globe in support of commands. Our soldiers are trained in 24 military occupational specialities, 13 warrant officer specialities, and six officer specialities. We have soldiers in the corps who can speak 38 different languages.

The Military Intelligence Corps is part of the Army team. Our organization is now capable of providing military intelligence support at all echelons. We cannot and must not allow the mistakes of the past to reoccur. A part of preventing a lapse into those deficiencies is for soldiers who wish to make the Army a career to read about our history, including the stories of the many individuals and events that any member of the Corps today can be proud of.

ENDNOTES

1. The Army Lineage Series: Military Intelligence (Draft), United States Army Intelligence and Security Command and U. S. Army Center for Military History, Dr. Jack Finnegan, p. 260. NOTE: This is an excellent reference for the history and chronology of events related to the development of Military Intelligence. Much of the data in this article is extracted from this document.

2. The Evolution of American Military Intelligence, United States Army Intelligence Center and School, May 1973, p. 18. Quoted from Ralph H. Van Deman, "Memoirs" unpublished manuscript located in the Library of the United States Army Intelligence Center and School, Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

3. Ibid., p. 24. NOTE: This is a great document which summarizes the growth of Intelligence. Many key dates and actions in this article are taken from this book.

4. Ibid., p. 41. Quoted from Harry Howe Ransom, The Intelligence Establishment, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, p. 48.

5. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1948, p. 31-33.

6. Evolution of Military Intelligence, p. 46. Quoted from Omar N. Bradley, A Soldier's Story of the Allied Campaigns from Tunis to the Elbe, Henry Holt and Company, New York, New York, 1951, p. 33.

7. Major General Sir Kenneth Strong, Intelligence at the Top, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1969, p. 178.

8. Brigadier General Oscar W. Koch with Robert G. Hays, G-2: Intelligence for Patton, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Whitmore Publishing Company, 1971, p. 165.

9. The Evolution of American Military Intelligence, p. 57.

10. Ibid., p. 82-83.

11. The Army Lineage Series: Military Intelligence (Draft), p. 153-155.

12. Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1967, p. 13-14.

13. The Army Lineage Series: Military Intelligence (Draft), p. 160.

14. Major General Joseph A. McChristian, The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967, Washington, D. C., Department of the Army, 1974, p. 157.

15. The Army Lineage Series: Military Intelligence (Draft), p. 206.